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## Moroccan Arabic on the Prowl

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### Abstract

The developments that are increasingly taking place in the communication and technology scene are indubitably advantageous, but they are also risky. This study looks into an issue that has generated a heated debate among different actors in the Moroccan community from a different perspective though. Besides considering the cultural weight of foreign soft products, which are invading the second widely-viewed channel, 2M, this paper essentially considers the linguistic impact of 2M's practice of dubbing many occidental broadcasts into the local dialect, Moroccan Arabic (MA). Such dubbing is fostered by the recourse of diverse businesses to MA in their advertising policy by transcribing MA using French and/or Standard Arabic (SA) script.

While it is true that customers have already extensively used MA whether in chatting platforms or when dispatching messages over cellulars not equipped with Arabic keyboards, this practice, I strongly believe, is not without any consequences. For, many academicians, such as Abdellah L  roui<sup>1</sup>, are worried that these novel communication behaviors on the part of media networks, companies and consumers endanger SA, cultural heritage and identity. In accordance, I claim that this onslaught waged by Moroccan media avenues alongside firms entails both linguistic and cultural perils for the community. This paper articulates such worries, delineates the implications of both positions and proposes recommendations for redressing the situation.

<sup>1</sup> Mobachara Ma3Akom Nordine Ayouch et Abdel Aaroui, in [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_ad6bq5BbDs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_ad6bq5BbDs)

**Key words:** Communication policy; Linguistic impact; Dubbing; Western soft products; Moroccan/standard Arabic; Cultural heritage

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### INTRODUCTION

First of all, many linguists, such as Moha Ennaji (2005), believe that Ferguson's (1959) theory of diglossia whereby Morocco has two varieties of Arabic: SA, the high variety, and the low variety, dialectal Arabic, is no longer valid. Diglossia, in fact, does not mirror the current linguistic situation in Morocco as many varieties are effectively at play in the country. Currently, four varieties of Arabic coexist, hence the quadri-glossia argument in line with which each of these varieties has its own linguistic features, functions and domains of use.

First, Classical Arabic (CA) is the language of the Qura'n and ancient Arabic literature. SA is the language of modern culture, the media and instruction. It is linguistically more flexible and is the medium whereby administrative documents are sought and issued. Modern Moroccan Arabic (MMA), thirdly, is an emerging variety and is associated with the educated. MMA is much simpler than SA and employs SA lexicon extensively. MMA is spoken over the radio, TV and in schools in less-formal situations. Lastly, dialectal Arabic, also known as darija or Moroccan Arabic (MA), is the informal variety that is spoken in daily conversations, at home, in the street, at work, and in the market place, etc..

Besides these four varieties, foreign languages enjoy a significant presence in the country and further complicate the local linguistic scene. French, as the language of the colonizer, heads these languages nationally. Despite the

state's policy of arabization, French is used alongside SA in many domains, such as education, public administration and the media. Spanish, the language of the colonizer of northern and southern parts of the kingdom, still relishes some status, but is much less limited than French. The global ascent of English as the medium of scientific research, technology and advancement has caused some enthusiasts, as the present Minister of Higher Education, to argue for reinforcing its presence, especially in higher education. German is also an emerging language in the nation but its use is limited in some institutions only. This heterogeneous linguistic situation certainly puts forth many issues and encourages code-switching, mixing and borrowing.

However, the linguistic situation in Morocco has undergone ample variations in the last decade. It seems that the political metamorphoses the MENA region has witnessed have also impacted the linguistic side in the country. That which is commonly referred to as the "Arab Spring" has given the national linguistic landscape a flamboyant wind. The king's March 9<sup>th</sup> speech<sup>2</sup> has drawn sort of roadmap not only the political, social and economic scenes, but for the linguistic and cultural fields as well. It has officialized the status of the Amazigh varieties besides Hassani. However, some linguist and non-linguist enthusiasts have gone far beyond these propositions.

In this respect, the investor and social activist Nourddine Ayyouch has called for teaching through MA, i. e., uplifting Darija/MA to be the medium of instruction. This call has triggered an unprecedented debate among Moroccan intellectuals who undertook to defend the grandness of SA, also termed Fusha. Other literati seek to relegate the position French enjoys in the national educational system to a minor level sidewise this controversy. These bring up its deterioration on the international scene and emphasize English instead in view of its global ascent on all walks of life, in the sciences, technology, culture, politics and research. These claims culminated in the Ministry of national Education launching the international baccalaureate option. Yet, the debate is never slackening across media avenues. The upcoming picture best summarizes and articulates this intense polemic:



**Figure 1**  
**Intense Polemic Across Media Avenues**

<sup>2</sup> King Mohammed VI of Morocco Historic speech / March 9, 2011 in <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T-nNedwfoQ>

## 1. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

While the contribution of foreign languages in the educational system and the role of the Amazigh varieties in bolstering the bonds among Moroccan society's different constituents are far indisputable, the MA argument, I strongly believe, is not only incongruous but also entails tremendous perils. In fact, it was the 2M that brought MA to the fore when it dubbed many of the borrowed serials and soaps into MA.

Dubbing these imported shows into MA has enlarged 2M's viewership among large segments of the Moroccan population. *Hibapress* electronic paper on May 21<sup>st</sup>, 2015 brings up the findings of a report by the official TV audience rating's institution, MarocMétirie. The report reveals bulky masses of viewers attending to these foreign dubbed broadcasts on 2M though they incessantly criticize and claim not watching them on social media. It also mentions that the Turkish serial *Thaman el Hob* (the cost of love) ranked second after *Samhini* (forgive me) that heads the tally with 4 million viewers (§, 5). Other reports by the same organization published by the same paper on September 5<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>, in addition to *Alyaoum24* on September 9<sup>th</sup>, 2015 disclose and reinforce the same findings.

It is, then, this practice on the part of 2M which gave MA a fresh push and initiated its use into a domain that was the exclusive province of SA. No doubt, this venture has enlarged its viewership, especially among housewives, children and the retired. This has accordingly impacted its advertising revenue.

This enlarged audience and ever-rising benefits seem to have lured other businesses which adopted 2M's initiative and are having recourse to MA in their ads. All of the telecommunication firms operating in the nation, building societies, such as Essaâda, money transfer enterprises as WafaCash and Proximo, car selling companies like Fiat, in addition to Lesieur as well as Hypermarkets, viz Marjane, have together turned to MA both in their auditory and written commercials. These businesses broadcast their MA adverts not only on TV or the radio, but publish these on internal city busses, flashy bill boards and local press.

## 2. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES, QUESTIONS AND ASSUMPTIONS

In this regard, the running investigation seeks to raise the issue of what I consider an aggression on the part of various media networks and numerous businesses on SA. It also intends to find out the reasons behind this immense resort to Darija among different media outlets and firms alike. In addition, this paper aims at unveiling the implications of this communicational policy adopted by both communication avenues and business organizations. The study additionally investigates the consequences and the issues that this practice involves and puts forth.

Ultimately, it recommends possible measures whereby to redress the situation.

Meeting these objectives necessitates responding to these research questions, namely:

- a) What are the reasons behind extensive recourse to Darija among different media outlets and businesses?
- b) What are the implications of this communicational policy?
- c) What are the challenges and consequences that this practice brings into play?

In accordance, I strongly believe that this considerable usage of Darija by both media networks and a large number of businesses constitutes an unparalleled assault on SA. I also think that both broadcasts dubbed into MA and Darija-adverts put forth hazardous perils regarding the status of SA as well as the literate, linguistic and cultural levels of viewers. It is assumed that MA, thanks to its extensive presence in the media and various walks of life, is gradually invading the sphere of SA and is explicitly gaining ground. Unless brought under control, this intrusion threatens to imperil the linguistic situation in the country and displace SA from its prestigious and time-honored position to assume some of its glorious roles.

It is therefore necessary to safeguard the purity of SA and reestablish its grandness and primacy. Related authorities, decision-makers, linguists and social activists must assume and undertake this mission so that these perils do not turn out to be the unintended or unanticipated consequences of this conspicuous employment of MA, if we assume that they are unintentional.

Soft output, whether it be a movie or a serial, is not only about the actual story line. Likewise, an advert is more than the mere promotion of a certain product or service features and usefulness. Much often, the instrument whereby the narrative is communicated to audience members or by means of which some good is promoted, this instrument is frequently overlooked though Marshall McLuhan (1964) asserted that the medium is the message. The medium, MA, is an essential component of media broadcasts and ads. The medium not only shapes the message, but turns out to be the message itself. The medium also involves the channel(s) the message(s) travel(s) through. In accordance, TV and radio stations, newspapers, websites, billboards, presenters, etc., in addition to language, altogether not only monopolize the lion's share of the message, but override the message's – the content's importance.

### 3. DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

The study objectives and questions point clearly to a mixed method design. It is mixed in the sense that data obtained and dealt with is both quantitative and qualitative. The elicitation instruments are also diverse as I relied on observation and interviewing. The study also

involves a disparate sample that falls into 3 categories: children, teachers and marketing managers.

In accordance I observed 11 children who belong to my family, 5 nephews and 6 nieces. I observed their TV attendance behavior, as well as their Arabic language conversations and writing performances for a period of five months in coordination with their mothers, who are now keen on attending to the Turkish serial *ينحس* (Forgive Me) on a daily basis. These mothers told me that they had already watched many dubbed shows, such as *Thaman el Hob* (the cost of love) together.

I noticed that the kids would throw swearwords, such as *ريق* (despicable), at one another, a term widely used among this dubbed soap actors. One evening, I engaged them in conversations in SA and carefully watched their utterances. I once asked them to tell me what they did during that day knowing that they helped their parents with the olive harvest. Then, Meriem, a 12 years-junior high school students produced the following utterance:

“نوتيزلا تديح و ةرجشلا يف تعلط” (I climbed the olive tree and harvested the olives) instead of “تقلسست” “نوتيزلا تينج و ةرجشلا”.

Upon asking why Oualid, a 10 years-primary school student, was crying, he produced this reply:

“ناري جلا دلو تخلس تيح ةحساق ةبرض يبا ين اطعأ” - instead of “ناري جلا نبا تبرض امدن ع ةدشب يبا ين برض” (dad penalized me severely when I hit our neighbour's son).

These kids daily attend to dub soaps on average 40 minutes a day. They are also faithful viewers of 2M's broadcast *Alkhawasser*, which they appreciated quiet a lot.

Then, I interviewed 6 teachers, including the kids' educators, four of whom are primary school instructors and the two others are SA junior high school practitioners. In fact, we talked over the issues of the ascending presence of MA in the media and public life. We also discussed the rampancy of dubbed soaps among housewives, the offspring and the retired together with the effects of both. This interview was rather unstructured and proceeded more like a discussion, but was quite informative. When the interview is less spontaneous, the interviewees tend to be reluctant and may act up other roles.

However, the second interview took place inside the offices of companies using MA ads and was more structured. Five marketing managers were interviewed and were approached with the study questions in MA. These marketing department officials replied more succinctly as they were short of time. However, these superintendents insisted on anonymousness fearing possible sanctions on the part of their senior managers if they disclose what they considered confidential information about their communication policy.

In what follows I consider how MA made its entry into the media and started to gain an explicit presence. At a starting point, I explicate how Moroccan folks



got exposed to MA. Then, I bring up the effects of this exposure. In accordance, I isolate one effect that I also consider as a corollary assault on SA, namely the written representation of MA in ads.

## 4. EXPOSURE TO MA

The first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century has given MA a flamboyant wind. After a long period of marginalization, MA is gaining more visibility nowadays. After it had been relegated to marginal roles in the shade of SA, MA broke oral culture's shell wherein it flourished. MA is currently enlarging its scope into zones other than folklore, popular songs, folk tales, proverbs, sayings, etc.. MA is forcefully thrusting itself into TV, the press and advertising.

### 4.1 Dubbing – Hearing MA

Dubbing is the process whereby the voice track that has been translated in a different language variety, MA in our case, replaces the original voice track of the TV program at stake. Dubbing operates by mimicking the lip movements and timing of the initial show. This is why, viewers get the impression that the onscreen characters are in fact utilizing the dubbed/target language. In other words, dubbing creates a perfect illusion by inducing viewers to believe that the foreign actors of the dubbed broadcast are indeed speaking the viewers' language, MA, yielding what Petrucci (2012) labels the "suspension of audio-visual disbelief" (p.34). Suspending this incredulity prompts audience members to consider the target language, MA, as the language of production.

Inspired by the huge success and excitement accompanying the Turkish serial *Noor* that MBC stations dubbed into the Syrian Arabic variety, 2M started dubbing its borrowed shows into MA in 2009. Following the pervasive enchantment about the handsome protagonist Mohannad, 2M took the initiative of dubbing most of its imported serials into MA. Many borrowed serials and soaps from different nationalities are broadcasted on 2M on a daily basis and at peak viewing time. For instance, the Turkish serials *ينى حىامس* (Forgive me) and *بحال نىم* (the cost of love) corner a sizeable share of both 2M's broadcasting menu and viewers' viewing time.

No doubt, dubbing these melodramas into MA gave Moroccan audience members the chance to hear MA on their TV sets after long years of watching these borrowed shows in French, SA, and Egyptian or Syrian language varieties. In fact, these shows were familiar among local viewers long before 2M's gumption, especially amid semi/educated adolescents who could grasp Egyptian and Syrian dialects much effortlessly bearing in mind that Moroccans were exposed to Egyptian ever since the onset of TV broadcasting in the country. Nonetheless, 2M's dubbing into MA initiative generalized their viewing on a large scale as it overcame the illiteracy handicap. This enterprise, in accordance, rendered such broadcasts much

intelligible among uneducated house women and men even though a considerable portion of the educated attend to these programs as they criticize them on social media. Briefly, this act invigorated MA and glued more audiences to their TV sets. Both *Hibapress* (September 5<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>, 2015) and *Alyaoum24* (Sep. 9<sup>th</sup>, 2015) report more than 5 million viewers to be keen on watching *ينى حىامس* (Forgive Me)" and *بحال نىم* (the cost of love)" upon a recent census by MarocMétie (§, 6).

### 4.2 Dubbing Perils

In accordance, the dubbing of foreign serials into MA broadens their reach and widens their viewership, notably amidst the unschooled and house women. This widened viewership maximizes the entailed perils owing to the break of the linguistic barriers that used to prevent unlearned audiences from attending to these dubbed shows. The breach of the linguistic impediments bridges the gap between viewers and the aired foreign culture as language and culture are inseparable. These torn or shortened distances of interaction provide a congenial atmosphere for the transmission of effect. In other words, such closeness optimizes and enhances the opportunities of impacting the viewer that unconsciously feels as though interacting with other fellow citizens because of the medium used, i. e., MA. That is, the viewer unwarily fails to recognize the otherness of the performers and the foreignness of the broadcast culture. Failure to attain such recognition not only fosters cultural dissemination, but also embeds foreign cultural values and alien thought patterns effortlessly. In a nutshell, this narrowed linguistic remoteness together with this failed perception enables borrowed serials' embedded culture to travel smoothly and infiltrate into local culture, which yields a corresponding cultural confusion within the viewers' community.

Moreover, the dubbed soaps not only undermine Moroccan ancestral values, but also diffuse a considerable set of cultural standards that are incongruent with the local cultural lore. In particular, I think that the content of these borrowed serials subverts a sizeable concoction of indigenous cultural values, namely family integration, shyness, besides well-manneredness. Parent-child respect, spirit of community and solidarity are equally weakened. Spiritual love, legitimate gain as well as veiledness are also ruined. On the other side, I believe that their input disseminates a noticeable hodgepodge of cultural archetypes, mainly vulgarity, libertinage besides materialistic and physical love. Family disintegration and individualism are incredibly ennobled. Similarly, decay of morals and ethics alongside usury are fabulously aggrandized. Clearly, these imported melodramas introduce into Moroccan households outlandish cultural values and downplay numerous facets of Moroccan pedigreed culture.

Such is the menace these dubbed shows entail because openness on otherness necessitates identity awareness.

However, this identity awareness is being absented within the Moroccan communicational scene. Where identity construction should take precedence, identity destruction not only supersedes but dominates the media discourse. This intentional linguistic and cultural incursion on the part of media networks seeks to absorb Moroccan viewers' attention, wash up their cultural defense mechanisms and cause them to avoid contact with SA in view of its cultural affluence, symbolic richness, religious weight, spiritual significance, cognitive presence and thinking arrogance.

Indeed, I think that the massive presence of MA and its corresponding expansive exposure are deliberate so as to deprive households from connection with SA. This intentional deprivation aims at bereaving house women and the offspring, which constitute any nation's defensive walls, from acquaintance with a body of Arabic literature, an array of thinking modes, value and behavioral patterns. It is this wealth that is at stake because it cultivated a cultural shield, a spiritual superiority and immunity that the media seek to undermine taking into account the emptiness and oral nature of dialectal Arabic. The objective is to yield shallow individuals which would be defenseless before the flow of soft and hard products.

Nonetheless, many observers consider that 2M upgraded its assault on SA through the local show *Al Khawasser*, broadcast on Ramadan 2015. This serial is patterned on the famous historical broadcast *Al Kawasser*. Even members of the clergy, such as Sheikh Nahari, as mentioned in *Hibapress* (June 27<sup>th</sup>, 2015, 03:22), could not be indifferent regarding the peril entailed in this controversial show. *Al Khawasser* narrator and actors intentionally blend SA and MA lexical items, producing a crude, vulgar and dirty variety. Consider these narrator's early utterances, for example:

في ضرا لة كركال نم تنق يف (In some corner of the planet)

رافيقال وءالخالو يف ايفال او طحقلا طسو (in the midst of drought, deserts, seclusion and remoteness)

يف تلخدو يزيسلا اءاء قل يبق يف اوحاطمءن مهرز نمو (because of their misfortune, they fall into a miserable tribe that is being seized and sold via auction)

او جراك تيل اءءا عم قلبظلا ىلع او كربف (they sat with its owners to achieve a deal)

ىعك دق مو قلا ديس (their chief is angered).

N. B. Lexical items in MA are italicized.

In brief, I consider that dubbing into MA in addition to local products on the pattern of *Al Khawasser* bear enormous perils regarding the purity and cleanness of SA. 2M's enterprise, in addition, not only accustomed local viewers to hearing MA, but also paved the way for another aggression, notably that of writing MA, a task successfully undertaken by Moroccan businesses.

## 5. WRITING – ADVERTISING THROUGH MA

In fact, it was cellular customers that first used Darija when writing their SMS texts, albeit using the French script. Still, a close examination of these SMS productions shows a special usage of French that is peppered with some numbers that make up for the absence of some Darija sounds in the French alphabet. In accordance, the numbers 7, 3, and 9 replace the missing Darija sounds /ح/, /ع/, /ق/ respectively. This usage is gaining recognition and is ever more common nowadays even among businesses. Consider these two sentences taken from the Telecommunication company Inwi's website:

- Beddel Sawtek, w'd7ek m3a s7abek (change your voice and tease your friends)
- Semme3ni – lli 3eyet lik itmousse9 (make me hear – he who ever calls you, would listen to music).

This behavior is more rampant nowadays and signals, I believe, the first attempt to write Darija, yielding what I would term as Frenija, a fusion of French and Darija.

These users upgraded their initiative, especially with the appearance of cell phones that are Arabic-enabled. These Arabic-enabled mobiles caused such customers to abandon the French script and use Arabic letters instead when writing Darija, producing what I would label as Arabija, a fusion of Arabic and Darija. No sooner did this tendency to arabijize emerge that it thrived far and wide, especially among the youth. The proliferation of arabijization inspired and led many businesses to integrate it in their TV, press, and street adverts. A case in point, *Nichane* (say it straight), the Arabic version magazine of the weekly paper *Telquel*, makes use of Darija titles written in SA script to attract attention and boost its purchases. *Nichan*'s issue (91, December 9-15, 2006) entitled نيدلا ىلع قبرا غملا وكحضيك شافيك: تكانل (jokes: how Moroccans laugh at religion, sex and politics) raised a public scandal in 2006.

### 5.1 Advertising Through Darija

In fact, Darija was already being used and heard in ads on Moroccan TV channels and over national radio stations. But, advertising through Darija represented using SA, what I call "arabijized" adverts constitutes a novelty practice that is progressively endorsed by many businesses. Nowadays, arabijized adverts are ubiquitous in many flashy posters, sign boards and billboards in almost all business centers or touristed areas of major Moroccan cities.

In reality, I think it was the telecommunications operator *Inwi* that extensively adopted arabijization in its advertising campaign when the company replaced *Wana* in February 2010. *Inwi* inaugurated its teaser campaign with a very indicative arabijized fragment ري غتلا تقو (it is time for change) with diacritics placed over the SA letters and enclosed between two bigger size letter "I" as though slashes in reference to the company's name as is visible through the following picture:

When *Wana* rebranded into *Inwi*, the latter chose to highlight the change, I think, in a four-fold manner. Firstly, the use of MA, then MA represented through SA rather than Roman script secondly. Thirdly, the use of diacritics to reinforce the fusion between SA and MA. Fourthly, charging telephonic transactions by the second instead of by the minute differently from the other operators' practice. Indeed, the utilization of MA written in SA alphabet indicates an innovation and change, which is what the company wanted to stress via arabijization so that the form and content of the message go hand in hand and reinforce the same allusion, which is a break from former traditions.



**Figure 2**  
**Company's Name**

Moreover, with the announcement of *Inwi*'s growing sales' pitch as more customers sought to benefit from its by second-charging basis, other businesses not only aligned with *Inwi*'s billing mode, especially the telecommunication companies, but also resorted to its communication policy, namely arabijization. As a consequence, more arabijized adverts are ever more conspicuous in main downtown street billboards and flashy posters. Consider the following random collection of arabijized ads I unselectively noted down upon an unplanned promenade along Agadir high streets:

- مكيل ع حرتقتك ... مكيل مدقتك ... :قدا عسل ا تاءاضف (Espace Saâda: presents to you ... suggests to you houses that are suitable to both of you and your children)

- WafaCash: دشتم الب سول فل ا طف ي صرت شاب (So that you send money without standing in queues, no other agent than WafaCash)

- Porximo: الب كسول ف ذو خو طف ي ص Porximo (Send and get your money without queuing at Proximo)

- Lesieur: روي سول شال عاه مك تكل كامف مك تحص تي ح (Because your health is in your food, this is why Lesieur)

- Aswaq Salam: باب ح ل ا باج و اج ناضم (Dear clients, Ramadan has come and has brought gifts)

- ديزت قرض ل ا شادقتك ا م ضرور ع ل ا و شال ب الو ل ا و ج ري غ (IAM (No other operator but Jawal, offers are limitless and talking grows sweeter with Ittissalalt Al MAhgrib)

- ري غ ل دب او ه او ه ق ا ذ م ل ا راني ي ل و ي ك Miami (Miami changes into Rani: same taste, change only the name)

- نال بل ا و ت م ف ف : ن ا ط ل س (Sultan: got the plan)
- Inwi: ي تي غ ب ي ك رب ع (Communiczte as you please)
- Attijariwafabank: ك ا ع م ا ن ا (I am on your side)

I think that these firms resort to arabijization on the belief that they have to adopt the communication style that echoes that of their supposed clients. CocaCola's marketing manager, Omar Bennis as mentioned in *Hibapress* (June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2014, 12:00), supports this claim assuming that representing Arabic or Darija through Roman script is part of the policy of approaching the customers, notably the youth who progressively utilize this mode in their authentic or virtual conversations on a daily basis (§, 1).

Three marketing officials I interviewed insist that their companies were forced to address the public through the language their customers use. They continue that after an analysis of customers' social media and cellular dispatches, they figured out that they have to follow the trend otherwise they would be disconnected from their potential market, which all companies must be attentive to. They conclude that the decision to converge towards arabijization is wiser enough assuming that the closer the linguistic medium is from the intended recipients, the more favorable the consumers' appreciation of their products and services is.

Similarly, the two other marketing managers advocate analogous contentions. They believe that advertizing through MA represented via SA script as it is associated with ordinary people reflects real life experiences and represents the daily life and voice of our customers more efficaciously, which creates a credibility effect. They also stress that arabijization enhances the appeal and persuasive potential of their ads, which is most likely to foster the intake and purchase intentions of customers. So doing, our companies establish authenticity and proximity with customers who would identify more favorably with our goods.

I also consider that it is businesses whose output is targeted towards the masses that resort to arabijized adverts more often than companies offering luxurious products or services, such as airline industries or lavish cars which are inaccessible to the large populace. The latter companies privilege French, SA or sometimes code-switch among these codes when addressing their rather middle or upper class customers. These want to create a more prestigious brand image that the customer can aspire to.

Nonetheless, whether this emerging and growing tendency, arabijization, boosts such companies' sales remain untested. In fact, all of the marketing managers I interviewed confirm this correlation. They contend that as their communication messages have become more intelligible to most people thanks to the resort to MA, more and more cohorts are endorsing their products.

Furthermore, some companies have inventively transformed their communication policy. These are



integrating three language varieties in their ads, yielding a peculiar lexical amalgam. Consider for instance, the word *اطلكينوكت* (get connected) in Inwi's billboard advert, which blends and borrows the french word "connector", SA script and MA conjugation. In still another instance, other companies are naming themselves, their products or services through onomatopoeic labels, such as "Ataqaddaw (let's shop)", or the conversion of *Miami* into "Rani (rich)", which are represented in some code, French in these examples, but the lexical items are borrowed from another code, MA and SA respectively in the former instances.

Likewise, an Amazigh company also labeled its product as "نامأ" meaning "water", i. e., writing Amazigh via Arabic script to achieve intelligibility. It is perhaps paving the way for a regionalized advertizing policy that might be generalized with the onset of advanced regionalization in the kingdom. In accordance, firms might opt for addressing local customers through their mother tongue variety, i. e., Tarifit, Amazigh, Tashelhit or Hassani represented in SA or Roman script.

## 5.2 Written Darija's Entailed Perils

It seems that businesses' arabijized adverts have transferred the contagion far and wide. All of the four primary school and the two SA junior high school teachers complain that this extensive exposure both to oral and written darija on TV and street ads has deteriorated their students' expository and written performances. These educators insist that a great deal of their learners would unconsciously mix up both MA and SA when participating in class. These instructors also cite that some apprentices come up with arabijized sentences and fragments when producing some writing assignment. Consider, for instance, these instances produced by a 6<sup>th</sup> primary school level student that the teacher recalls:

- "ارافش تفش" instead of "اصل تيأر" (I saw a thief).
- "نوتيزلا تديحو و قرحشلا يف تلط" instead of "نوتيزلا تينج و قرحشلا تقلست" (I climbed the tree and harvested the olives)
- "ناريتلا يف يلح حاط" instead of "يف يلح طقس" (Ali fell in the terrain)
- "يسركلا يف سلج" instead of "يسركلا يلح سلج" (He sat on the chair)
- "نويزفلتلا يف جرفتأ" instead of "زافلتلا دهاشأ" (I watch TV)

Far from drawing any close or direct connection between these students' erroneous performances and media's arabijization usage, I think that this massive exposure to arabijization results in a linguistic confusion among learners. A fact that Aya, one of the 6<sup>th</sup> primary school level student I observed and that made the first afore-mentioned mistake, confirmed. Aya explains that she had seen the verb (watch) "فوش" written as such in some billboard advert of a car. Rachid, the other student

I observed and confronted with the last mistake, recalls having heard those lexical items on Al Khawasser, which he liked much and always insisted on not missing any of its episodes. He also illustrated that he could not differentiate which lexical items belong to SA and which are in MA.

I equally believe that even a junior high school apprentice would be confused and unable to distinguish between SA and MA lexical items in this *Alyaoum24* (November 6<sup>th</sup>, 2015/ 14:30) headline: "لوؤسم لاقتعأ" (an army official arrested breaking into a school in Meknes and penalizing a student). Such a student would be tempted to do the same. This *Hibapress* headline (November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2015/ 22:48) "بيلطت قلىاعل ريسيموك .. ويديفلاب" whose lexical wording would be equally puzzling.

In fact, even the Ministry of internal affairs remarkably used Darija represented through Arabic script when it addressed and incited the citizens to participate in the late September 5<sup>th</sup>, 2015 communal and regional elections. Many billboards, posters and signboards would show laymen and women from different professions uttering "توصن يداغ، مولع" (sure, I will vote) or "ةيلوؤسم لكب توصن" (voting is my choice, I will vote more responsibly) as the following bus poster shows:



**Figure 3**  
**Bus Poster**

Likewise, this resort to Darija incarnated through SA script is documented even among some social activists when protesting against some violation. A case in point, a lot of Human rights militants, supporting El Maätti Monjib, displayed a sign board that involves an arabijized slogan that reads as follows: "تقيقبام، عمقت ايعت اخاو" (no matter how hard you (the government) repress, we are no longer fearful). Such resort to darija represented in Arabic script is a conscious choice on the part of these protestors as rhyme and rhythm could have also been achieved had they used SA, viz. "نأ تلواح امهم، عزفأ تدع ام، عمقت".

These dissidents have perhaps deemed darija to be more expressive than SA in this context. As a matter

of fact, there is a correlation between darija, being the low variety and their social class, which is not high as well. Meaningfully enough, the dissident might have wanted to stress that the governmental decision is not popular among the masses so that the chosen medium of expression and the people demonstrating cohere and make sense together. For the same reason, arabijization was also common among protestors' claims during the late demonstrations against *Amendis* in Tangiers. Consider these verses take from *Hespress* (November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2015) for instance:

- "انقرستك سيدينام، قنتف يشام يداه" (this is not a disorder, Amendis is stealing us).

- "قرديك ناريكنبو، قرستك سيدينام" (Amendis is robbing us, while Benkirane (Head of government) is hiding it).

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

While admitting that a significant portion of Moroccans are illiterate plus another sizeable mass slightly literate, in addition to the pressing need of meeting the intelligibility drive as well as the commercial urge, all such wherefores, I strongly believe, are no sufficient reason to relegate SA to minor positions and prioritize darija instead in media discourse. These motives however reasonable they might seem, though they are not, are no excuse for the media and businesses to commercialize and trade in components of a nation's and a people's identity.

If our students, though mistakenly hopefully, are integrating some darija lexical items into their spoken and written performances, this threatens to accumulate on account of this irreversible and widespread exposure to darija on media broadcasts and ads in our daily life. If this assault on SA persists, children are very likely to experience greater linguistic confusion in the long run. In due course, children may not be able to distinguish between SA and MA lexical expressions. Items of the former may be, are in fact being, heavily used instead of the latter owing to heavy exposure to MA, which is greatly and worryingly present throughout different walks of life. This is why, linguists, enthusiasts and parents are called upon to act now before such a situation takes place. Before being overtaken by these incidental changes that threaten to swell in the years-to-come, this study strikes the alarm and proposes taking head of these incidents apriori they become pervasive.

There must be an official organization composed of language experts and linguists, which are charged with the mission of safeguarding the status, beauty and purity of SA against any liable contamination whatsoever. This institution is also to dis/approve adverts and TV shows' contents for language appropriateness. There must additionally be standards against which to measure the in/adequacy of translation in the media, especially in

the TV industry and advertising agencies. In short, this agency should also supervise media's incessant greed and gluttony, especially regarding cultural components of a nation's and peoples' identity.

I believe that the grandness and prestige of the language, SA, beautifies media items. SA would confer its beauty, purity and sophistication on media products. The latter would borrow SA's eloquence, expressiveness and nobility features for free, a testimony that the American company McDonald's has discovered and is putting into practice when it converged from "I'm loving it" into SA, hence the following slogan: سيسيح أم كن يبو ان يبي (Between you and us: common feelings bring us together) randomly taken from a billboard downtown Agadir city on November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2015.

The populace in general, and students I particular, should be reminded and enlightened about the greatness and nobleness of SA. It is greatly painful when some Arab user glorifies God, but transcribes his glorification via "L7amdo lillah" (thank God), forgetting that God himself chose SA for his message انا انزلنا انزلنا انزلنا (Surat Youssef, Verse 2), (Indeed, we (God) have sent it down as an arabic qur'an that you might understand".

With borrowed soaps dubbed into MA and MA publically concretized in advertizing, in addition to public members' arabijized complaints, the state's abovementioned arabijized utterances as well, I think Ayyouch's call is secretly being implemented. In other words, the public opinion is being prepared for the imposition of a fait accompli policy. Media and businesses' enterprise are but an initial step to sap public members' tension and acclimatize them for ..., for textbooks in MA!

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